



Ten Forward

The Theta Fleet Newsletter

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THE OTHER SIM CHOICE

Established in 2009, Theta Fleet prides itself in its "Mayberry" like community and continues to be a beacon of hope for Commanding Officers and writers in search of greener pastures, an alternative to high-pressure and polarizing fleet atmospheres.

What We Do?

We collect things...things to make us go. This is somewhat true, but really what we do is provide a home for wonderfully creative writers within the broader simming community.

Why Do We Do It?

Theta Fleet stands as "The Other Sim Choice," and is an alternative to the high-octane politics of other fleets. We offer shelter from the storm and you and welcome to stay indefinitely.

Won't You Be My Neighbor?

We are the "Mayberry" of the simming community which means you can always knock on a neighbor's door for help or to burrow some sugar.

Services Offered?

Theta Fleet offers hosting services to all sims in the fleet completely free of charge. Alternatively, Split-World Alliance provides their hosting and additional support services to any sim regardless of fleet affiliation or independence. There is also Anime Trek Avatars at your service.



2018 Simming Prize Laureate



From the Office of Admiral Kathryn Burke

Fleet Deputy Commander

Law & Order: Extended Leave of Absence

Vice Admiral Arik Barclay. The player behind Admiral Barclay joined Theta Fleet in January 2010 and became the first JAG. He served in that position until Admiral Brent McGinley stepped down as Commander-in-Chief in 2011.

The then-deputy Commander, Kathryn Burke stepped up to assume command and chose Barclay to be the new Deputy Commander.

He enjoys creating different types of sims, including a Star Trek sim, a SFMC sim, a Federation Marshal Service sim, a Stargate sim, and now Shards of Palaris, now in its second incarnation. The sim is set in 2393 Paris. It revolves around the President of the UFP and his cabinet.

He also wrote the Fleet Constitution and the template for the monthly commanders meeting.

In real life, Phil spent six years in the United States Marine Corps and then joined the Army National Guard where he attained the rank of Warrant Officer. He holds a degree in Political Science and currently works in law enforcement.

He's an active role-player and LARPer. He's a member of the Society of Creative Anachronism, a Live Action Medieval Roleplaying organization. His life experience and his love of roleplaying games have made him an ideal member of the fleet. He has been Burke's sounding board and helped develop the fleet into what it is today.

Due to his current involvement in law enforcement, he hasn't been around much this year. However, as soon as things slow down, he'll be back and involved in his sim and the fleet as a whole.

From the Office of Recruitment & Community Engagement

- The Dominion War approaches and you can be a part of it aboard the [USS Resolution](#).
- In 2233, the [USS Heyerdahl](#) is looking for a talented Communications Officer.
- Howling at the stars, the [USS Wolff](#) is waiting for fellow lunatics to for Ops and Engineering!
- Patrolling the Federation borders, the [USS Standing Bear](#) is seeking a Chief Flight Controller.
- Come grab life by the horns and join the [USS Sitting Bull](#) today!
- Looking for a sim with a long history? Check out the [USS Pandora](#) with its loyal crew.



Task Force Treasures Highlighted Sims of the Month

Task Force 23

The USS Aurora began in 2013 and ran for three years. It went through a major refit and reopened under the same CO in 2018. The former Chief Science Officer also returned and took the position of XO. Unfortunately, real life issues caused the CO to step down again.

When the XO deferred command, the intrepid Chief Counselor bravely stepped up. He was quoted as saying, "Who says a counselor can't command a starship?"

In the current mission, the Aurora investigates the loss of communications with a science team researching the planet as a possible site for future colonization.

The away team searches the computer logs in the research station. They show that shortly after discovering a tribe of what appear to be Neolithic cave dwellers, the scientists displayed a decreasing level of intelligence, ending several months before the Aurora's arrival, leading the away team to suspect that the missing research team had joined with the cave people.

While the caves and their occupants did not show up on any sensor scans, the team soon locates them and begins to investigate.

After a trip into the caves to bring back one of the scientists, the Chief Security Officer Trei was bitten by a cave lizard and rapidly became irrational, kidnapping Chief Engineer Nakano and retreating into the cave to become the new Alpha Male.

With some resistance, a security detail retrieved the two missing crew members who continue to display primal behavior and a noted lack of communication. Chief Medical Officer Zuub and Deputy Chief Medical Officer Nicoles are working to find a solution to what caused the change and then process a cure before the changes become permanent.

A Nova-class starship, the USS Aurora is set in 2395. A brand new mission awaits those aboard, as the Federation refocuses its efforts on its core values: Exploring new worlds and new civilizations. Join them on the dawn of a new adventure.

Area 51

Established in March of 2020, the USS Standing Bear was created outside of Theta Fleet as a side project with intentions of creativity and serving as a sanctuary for writers looking to put their energy into writing amid the global pandemic. Starting a sim at the early reports of COVID around the world was a risky venture as the forecast for simming was not looking good; however, the USS Standing Bear and its team of writers took the world's abundance of lemons and turned it into soothing, cold, sweet succulent lemonade on a hot crisp day. The sim did not just do alright, it did great.

Several months after its initial launching as a sim, it has found its place in the safe nurturing harbors of Theta Fleet where it continues to flourish and has become the Task Group Command for 51-C, replacing the GM's former Task Group Command of the USS Musashi. The sim started as a bond between writers who respected one another and appreciated the artistic expression, and together they continue to do so. Nine months into its existence and the USS Standing Bear roars with pride and stands tall welcoming new writers into its den.

The setting and circumstances for the USS Standing Bear is fairly straight forward; using the events referenced and shown in flashbacks on *Star Trek: Picard*, the Federation is aching internally and externally, vulnerable from attacks and still dealing with the tragedy of Mars, the crippling of the fleet with the destruction of Utopia Planitia Fleet Yards, and growing civil unrest due to the Romulan refugees planted on Federation worlds following the destruction of Romulus and the collapse of Star Empire.

The USS Standing Bear is not tasked with seeking out new life and new civilizations nor does it boldly go where no one has gone before... It protects known life and civilizations and proudly defends the Federation and its borders from threats foreign and domestic. She is a fast and nimble none deck patrol vessel, with very limited science and medical departments, typically staying 'close to home,' but occasionally acting as a scout and surveyor until a proper starship can be dispatched. The ship is decently equipped with weapons, but the Standing Bear is not built for prolonged combat, simply to land a quick barrage of strikes until something more intimidating arrives. Nevertheless, she proudly serves the United Federation of Planets and the Seventh Fleet.

FROM THE GALLEY



Looking for something to make with all that squash and those potatoes? We have the perfect dish for you!

Curried Autumn Harvest

by Raymond Dale

Winter may be coming, but we have plenty of Autumn vegetables to make a lovely warm hearty side dish (or main course if you want). This will be a hit with your Vulcan friends if they can get past the kick, but also great for friends of Bajor.

This recipe is completely vegetarian, but with some substitutions or additions, you can easily turn this into a meat eater's paradise.

SERVINGS

Can be made as a side dish or served as a main dish depending on desired portions.



INGREDIENTS

4 tablespoons of butter (salted if desired)
1 medium sized onion
2 cloves of garlic
3 teaspoons of curry powder
¼ teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon of salt
½ teaspoon of ground black pepper
2 lbs of fresh Pumpkin (or Butternut Squash)
3 medium sized red potatoes (or a type of your choosing)
1 ½ cups of vegetable broth
¾ cup of frozen baby peas
1 cup of golden raisins (or a type of your choosing)
Fresh cilantro (optional garnish)

RAYMOND DALE

Simming for almost twenty years, Raymond has held sim commands in various fleets, but has been a mainstay in Theta Fleet since 2015 having commanded the USS Katana (later commanded by Azmaria), USS Musashi, and USS Standing Bear, and has been the recipient of CO of the Quarter and commanding the Sim of the year 2017 and Sim of the Quarter twice.

Formerly, the Deputy Director of Recruitment, Raymond has stepped up to the role of Director and has been a TGCO in Area 51 since 2017. He currently commands the USS Standing Bear and USS Musashi and serves as First Officer of the USS Sitting Bull.

DIRECTIONS:

Heat butter in a large pan over medium-high heat, add onion, and cook until golden-brown, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook 1 minute more. Stir in curry powder, cinnamon, salt, and pepper. Add chopped pumpkin or squash and potatoes and cook for 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Pour in broth and raisins, cover, and reduce heat to medium. After 15 minutes, add peas. Replace cover and continue to cook until pumpkin and potatoes are tender, 5 to 10 minutes more. If do desired garnish with cilantro.

NOTES and TIPS:

Don't be afraid to up to the amount of curry powder or other spices to taste. Some people can handle a bit more of a punch with it. Also depending on the size of your pumpkin and potatoes, you may need a bit more broth. This can be served as a side or as a meal itself. Also, good served over rice.

ABOUT THE SHIP

Established in early this year as the USS Crazy Horse, the recently changed Inspiration class USS Sitting Bull replaces the old Luna class Crazy Horse, but with the same consistency! Outstanding performance in their previous fleet has carried over to Theta Fleet, where the Sitting Bull charges to the top of the mountain in the fleet's Area 51.

Site: <https://sittingbull.split-world.com>

Goring the winged horse and turning Greek

An Exclusive Interview with the bull handler and his journey from a circus to gold, SG, CO and GM of the USS Sitting Bull.

"It is a far, far better thing I do than I have ever done before. A far better resting place that I go to than I have ever known." – Admiral James T. Kirk

Reporter: You are one of the fleet's newest COs having like many, immigrated over from another fleet. What would you say has been the most positive change since transferring over to Theta Fleet?

SG: I would have to say the complete and total lack of drama! For reasons passing my understanding, where there is a rank structure, however artificial that may be, there is also politics and the drama that comes part and parcel with it. On my own sim, I think of myself as the GM and I know that my job is to keep the players happy because really, the ship belongs to them. Ask anyone who knows me, and they will tell you that I am not political. At all. Ever.

So, coming here, being a part of this fleet, meant that I could leave the politics behind once and for all. And second to that but not by much is how helpful everyone has been. Transfer was easy and once everything was set up; I was free to manage my sim as I saw fit. Bliss, total bliss.

Reporter: There's been a lot change since your initial start with Crazy Horse in your previous fleet(s) and into Theta Fleet. One of the most notable aesthetic changes is that you went from being the USS Crazy Horse to USS Sitting Bull. What triggered that change?

SG: The players. I set up a channel on my server called #sim-discussion and in that channel, I started asking questions of the players. What kind of missions did they want to do, etc. From that discussion, I got the clear message that they were interested in pure exploration especially when it touched upon them as individuals. With their input, I started brainstorming what I could do to give them what they wanted.

As a writer, I love world and campaign building. I've always got a million ideas rolling around in my head. At the same time, a departing player had gifted me with this great ship design, and I added that into the mix, did some brainstorming, and out of all that came the Sitting Bull. The idea is that it's not Starfleet but Pathfinder, a mix of ex-Starfleet, ex-Marine, and civilians, who are venturing into an unexplored area of space. The ship (which is admittedly huge) is intended to provide the crew with a sense of community and home while they are away from typical Federation resources.

Reporter: Crazy Horse to Sitting Bull, that sounds like a bit of a theme going on. Is there a reason why you chose those names?

SG: I was casting around for individuals who deserved to be remembered. Sitting Bull united the Sioux tribes against settlers who were ignoring the Fort Laramie treaty because gold had been found on native lands. They were ordered to move everyone in their village an impossible 240 miles in bitter cold; and worse, the government reneged on the treaty and indicated that anyone resisting the move off their sacred lands would be considered an enemy of the United States. He was quite the warrior and I have respect for someone who saw everything that mattered to him being taken from him and chose to stand up, fight back. Now, I am not violent by nature and I would have much preferred a peaceful solution but I'm not sure that was possible back then.

You know, he was a holy man, and he did a ceremony where he danced for 36 hours straight, making something like 50 sacrificial cuts on his arms? His trance led him to a vision and the Battle of Little Big Horn. He was friends with Annie Oakley, starred in Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West show for a bit and even met President Grover Cleveland. So, I thought he deserved to be honored.

Reporter: You and your crew have done an extensive amount of work during this transition. You went from a Luna class starship which is decently common to see in fleets (we have a few in Theta) to an Inspiration class, a bit of a variant of the Odyssey class which is much larger than your previous Luna class. Do you like larger starship designs?

SG: Actually, no. I much prefer smaller ships. To me, the Luna Class is too large. But I am a GM first and foremost and it is not about what I want. It is about what best suits the needs of the players and how I can orchestrate an environment where they will thrive. The idea that I am developing needed a bigger ship to work. My next sim? I am going for the smallest possible!

Reporter: What about changes with your character. You also created your CO character's species. What can you tell me about Captain Cian D'Anvers and any changes to him that you have made in recent months?

SG: I think the biggest struggle for me is bringing the Captain character to life. So often, he becomes little more than a vehicle for plot. The one that sits on the bridge and waits while everyone else runs around on missions or has briefings that give the players a chance to highlight what they've discovered or what they think on any given topic.

Inspiration for the character came from an article I read on ancient Sparta and another I read about garbage in the ocean and how it melts and forms into these islands (for want of a better word). So, I came up with someone who was born as property and then abandoned when the world was used up. The great ships take off for a new world and what is left behind is what they considered to be worthless -- the serfs.

But that was not enough, still a plot vehicle. Past few months I have been working hard on fleshing him out as a person. I killed off the wife (a past player's idea that did not work for me) and had him undergo some realizations about himself. It is not easy moving to a different country; can you imagine moving to a different world? Learning how to be free, how everything works? He made mistakes starting out under the pressure of trying to fit in and now, he's transforming into the truer version of himself ... and embarking on the start of a relationship that he's chosen for himself, maybe the first time ever. So, along with everything else, Cian is going to come out of the closet.

Reporter: I was privy to your report files from your previous fleet and to say impressive would be an understatement. The Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull have been consistent month after month, and moving over to Theta Fleet your sim and crew earned two TGCO Award of Merit, three consecutive silver Unit of Distinction awards, (probably getting gold for November), and the Fleet Commander named you Sim of the Quarter in September. I think we would all like to know the secret ingredients. What is your recipe for keeping so strong?

SG: Well, first, thanks! You know, that is a hard question to answer. Some of it is 'magic' and by that, I mean, finding a good crew, one that likes to write and more importantly, likes writing with each other. That is one part but the larger part of it, is being there, day in and day out. One of the players on my ship has a saying. He will come into the Bullpen and announce that he 'can't be arsed' (Idiom that means that he does not care about anything.)

I would say, that as a GM that is the one thing you can NEVER be. You have to show up every day. Pay attention to the details. Notice when someone is not participating and reach out to them. Be the strongest writer on your ship (even if they never realize it) and always be willing to fill in where it is needed and step in when a problem arises.

Truth is, we are all busy. If you start using that as an excuse not to be involved, how long will it be, before your players are saying the same thing? Not long I suspect. So, I think of that as the basics.

On top of that, you need to build a campaign or a mission and then be flexible enough to toss it out the airlock when it is not working for the players. I come up with a solution and a player has a completely different solution -- we negotiate and come up something that combines elements of both and then, I use that idea later for something else.

I used to be a tabletop DM for a long while. I would want the players to go left and they would go right instead. Contrary bunch. So, over the next week, I would rearrange everything I had planned so that it fit in with what they were doing. Cut out whole chunks that were not working. I think that's part of it too. Being responsive to the players and letting their input guide what happens. And always, hope for a little 'magic'.

Reporter: All sims and COs have hiccups along the way and obstacles to overcome. What has been your biggest challenge as a CO?

SG: The player you are talking about wrote about committing cold-blooded murder on a whim. The more I thought about it, the more I thought it would be a great bit of writing doing the court martial. Bring in guest writers and have the final sentence be decided by a poll (either on the ship or across the fleet).

As a writer, I love those kinds of challenges. Digging into how all of that makes people feel is interesting. So, the crew gets to write their reactions, maybe take the witness stand, and get some shore leave (our first).

I should also point out that this is part and parcel of a roleplaying game. In my tabletop games, my players always knew they would have to face the consequences of their actions. Had a weekend game (Friday night through Sunday) with two chefs who were competing about the best meals to serve. One of the players sniffed a flower on the first night and died. Ended up having to roll a new character on the spot.

Consequences. Write about murdering someone? Then you are going to face a trial and sentencing. That is how it works. And it will be in the player's bio. Course, that same player got to write in a new character as Chief of Operations as well. It has been fun ... and we have a real-life lawyer writing for the prosecution.

Reporter: You are from the United States where we just had Thanksgiving. So, in closing I thought I would ask you one little thing: What is one thing about the Crazy Horse and/or Sitting Bull that you are most thankful for and why?

SG: Hmmm ... So many things. Can't limit it to just one, I'm afraid. For the great community of writers who chose to become part of the Sitting Bull and who choose to stay. I never take that for granted. For an XO who has become a friend and who gets my way of doing things (so rare!). For a fleet that thrives in a non-competitive atmosphere without the need for power players. For the chance to explore my creativity and write about things that interest me. I'm very thankful.



The Admiral's Son: Diamond in the Rough

"I've never been very good at playing by the rules. That doesn't mean that serving under your command hasn't changed me - for the better. At least, this time I broke the rules for a reason, for something I believed in" – **Lieutenant Tom Paris, *Star Trek: Voyager* "30 Days"**

Do you hate the character of Thomas Eugene Paris? Well, my past years of fan interaction has certainly led me to suspect that you are not in the minority if you hold that opinion, or at the very least, you'll find someone to agree with you. See, I have befriended and dated Trekkies over the years, or in some cases turned them into Trekkies. One interesting thing I have noticed though even with fans of *Star Trek: Voyager* is either a strong dislike or 'no opinion' stance of neutrality on this character. I, however, am of the stance of strong favorability of Tom Paris.

The other week, I had another one of these anti-Paris encounters in an online discussion with a bunch of strangers. The instigator of the conversation had been watching *Voyager* (a series they were not all that fond of) and it was I believe their second or third viewing. The central topic of discussion was that they did not understand the value of Tom's character or why Ensign Harry Kim would be friends with Lieutenant Tom Paris. This person felt it was forced writing and a complete mismatch. Likewise, a few years ago my partner who loves B'Elanna Torres and the *Voyager* series also voiced not really getting Tom as a character. He did not hate Tom, but he also was not fond of Tom. I believe I successfully altered these individuals' opinion of Tom Paris upon deeper conversation, and my partner at least see's the character in a new light.

Tom, Harry, and B'Elanna were essentially the 'trinity' of this series. Three characters who were close and remained tethered together throughout the seven seasons. Let's have a brief look at them individually: Harry was a young ensign in season one, still rather fresh from the academy, and was a by the books individual whom Starfleet was everything. B'Elanna had a chip on her shoulder, always felt she was bullied, and dropped out of Starfleet Academy yet her field experience and years of gorilla warfare with the Maquis made her an exceptional eventual Chief Engineer. Tom Paris was supposed to be the golden boy, the chosen son, Starfleet had been in his bloodline and his father was a current Starfleet Admiral, but Tom messed up, his career was tarnished, and in the first episode Captain Janeway has to retrieve Tom from prison (penal colony), not intended to be part of the crew, but to temporarily use his expertise for a mission.

These three came together because they each had something the other admired, valued, or coveted. Harry had a 'white knight' complex in which he felt he could reform Tom Paris, and wanted to prove to B'Elanna that Starfleet was not a bad thing. He also envied Tom because Tom was something Harry never could be, a rule breaker with a perfume of self-confidence. Likewise, Harry was everything Tom was supposed to be and was not; a successful Starfleet officer who undoubtedly made his parents proud. B'Elanna was 'designed' for this stranded in the Delta Quadrant situation where you had nobody, no Federation or Starfleet to rescue you, and survival was everything.

Tom Paris from season one is different than Tom Paris from season seven. That is not just seven years of episodes, that is seven years of good writing and character development. Some may label Tom Paris

as a 'man child' and they are not wrong. He is youthful even as an adult, and he still has that childlike way about him, but he does have the ability to be a serious officer when the need demands it. Tom is a textbook case of an individual who lost the ability to have a childhood. There was pressure on his father to carry on family tradition and serve Starfleet (most applicants to the academy are seventeen or eighteen, but we know some have gotten in as young as fifteen). They gave him a similar backstory to that of Cadet Nick Locarno from the *Next Generation* episode "First Duty" (same actor), and I won't get into the why they didn't use the Locarno character (long story about rights). This means Tom was responsible for the death of others (his friends) and covered it up. He confessed after the fact and Starfleet wanted nothing more to do with him which led him to the Maquis and being apprehended after his first Maquis mission.

Ultimately, I admire Tom Paris' character because he was so flawed, but there was a realism to his flaws. He had an overbearing father and was 'destined' to be this infallible career Starfleet officer, someone that could do no wrong; however, he did. He did wrong and it cost him the lives of his friends, the uniform, his sense of purpose, and for a while he felt it had cost him the love and respect of his father. What he gained on the USS Voyager was friendship in Harry Kim who always saw the potential in Tom, the love of B'Elanna Torres who Tom found companionship in their both being outcasts, family within the crew, a sense of purpose and belonging as the starship's helmsmen (Chief Flight Control Officer), and the respect and admiration of "foster parents" in the form of Lieutenant Commander Chakotay and Captain Kathryn Janeway. Chakotay did not initially like Tom, but he pushed Tom to be a better person. Janeway was the anchor that grounded Tom, gave him opportunity to prove himself, but was swift to reprimand him when necessary.

Is Tom the perfect character? No, absolutely not; however, he does deserve to be analyzed and evaluated taking everything about his past into consideration. I do truly believe that he's far more than just a 'man child' who bucks authority and loves sci-fi and cartoons. He's a complex character and a fan, I can value the character of Tom Paris for having imperfections and a journey of redemption and self-discovery.